

## City of Yarra

The Yarra River is one of the key elements defining the municipality (forming nearly half of the Council boundary) and is one of its most important natural assets. The Yarra has gone from a forgotten and maligned system, to one revered by residents and crucial to local biodiversity. Council has undertaken many initiatives to clean up and bring people and biodiversity back to this unique resource.

The community has formed its own groups which focus on preserving and beautifying the municipality's river, creeks, and parks. Established groups in Yarra include the Merri Creek Management Committee and Darebin Creek Management Committee (Both of which are supported by Council), various Friends Associations. Council is also involved in Landcare and Waterwatch.

**Street Trees** - Council has a comprehensive program to plant 800 – 1000 street trees each year which also improves local amenity and liveability, and maintains approximately 21,000 street trees in total. Street trees are planted according to Water Sensitive Urban Design principles wherever possible to filter stormwater and reduce waterway pollution.

**Walker St Constructed Wetland** - In 2008, the Yarra City Council with Melbourne Water created a significant stormwater treatment raingarden and wetland complex in the Merri Creek parklands. These 200m<sup>2</sup> raingardens were developed in response to a severe erosion problem; water way health, urban reforestation, and community consultation, and filter stormwater before it enters the Merri Creek. Monash University uses the site for ongoing research, and surrounding Council's have use the learnings to advance projects in their area.

**Dights Falls Restoration** - Melbourne Water is completing works to replace the 100 years old Dights Falls Weir. The new weir will be similar to the existing structure, for heritage reasons, and a new the fishway will allow fish to swim upstream, benefiting 11 species of native migratory fish.

**Yarra Riverkeeper Association** - is a community organisation formed in 2004 to protect and restore the Yarra River and its tributaries. The group is a leader in understanding and advocating for the Yarra River, and researching river management, water supply, conservation and recycling and pollution control. The riverkeepers have provided on-water inspection tours to over 200 community and political leaders and delivered over 300 presentations. See <http://www.yarrariver.org.au/home.html>

### **Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)**

In 2007 Yarra and Melbourne Water, developed WSUD Guidelines to help residents, developers and Council. WSUD treatments stop litter from reaching waterways, filter pollutants before entering the stormwater pipes on their way to our waterways and passively water street trees and other plantings.

Council has constructed 26 street raingardens as a part of an ongoing WSUD program since 2008, as well as the award-winning **Smith Street bioretention tree pits**. At Smith Street, Council designed an innovative system to direct stormwater runoff into a "treatment train"

of 18 bioretention pits. The pits remove contaminants before stormwater enters the drainage system, improving the streetscape amenity and passively irrigating the trees. Modelling predicts an 83.5% reduction in Total Suspended Solids and a 40% reduction in Total Nitrogen, with around 240 litres of litter (bottles, food packaging, butts, etc) trapped and removed from the tree pits every fortnight.

Council is also nearing completion, with support of Melbourne Water, of a 690m<sup>2</sup> raingarden in the historic **Edinburgh Gardens** in North Fitzroy. This major initiative will improve the health of waterways downstream by filtering pollutants from stormwater, and capture water for reuse. Harvested stormwater will be stored in a 200,000lt underground tank, and provide over 50% of water needed to irrigate the avenues of historic trees. The contemporary raingarden design will form a landscape feature in Yarra's most heavily used open space and make the stormwater treatment process visible to the public.